



**N NTU**

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## Can We Count On YOU?

It started with the legislature eliminating all public election financing in the state budget. It is now entirely in the hands of private interests. Now legislators have made it harder for the public to see how special interests are funneling money into political campaigns.

The Legislature's Joint Committee for Review of Administrative Rules (JCRAR) voted to approve legislation nullifying what little campaign finance disclosure the state Government Accountability Board (GAB) has approved. However, in addition to that, Republicans on the JCRAR handcuffed the GAB from making any future rulemaking requiring disclosure of corporate electioneering.

There are several other examples where it is obvious what the agenda is for the Republicans. It is clear they do not want the public to know what is going on in the higher levels of government.

For instance, postings for meetings in the Capitol are no longer found on the Legislature's website, Madison newspapers, or on-line political news services. They now just post them on a wall in the Capitol.

And when the office of JCRAR co-chair Jim Ott was called to get a copy of the above proposed legislation, one of Ott's staffers took offense and barked "we're not trying to hide anything." When pressed further, the aide told the phone caller he just sent it via e-mail. Well, guess what? The person never received the e-mail.

Once the proposed legislation was obtained, it became quickly obvious the GAB was not aware of it even though it involved their agency entirely.

But the greatest travesty to democracy came when the JCRAR passed the proposal. Not only did they vote on strict party lines but Chairman Ott ordered police intervention to stop a man from filming the proceeding with a camcorder. The young man did not say a word or cause a disturbance. He simply recorded the event!

We have seen....

- ◆ the rights of working people to organize and collectively bargain taken away.
- ◆ a state Supreme Court justice write in a majority opinion that a circuit court judge who threw out this illegally passed bill was wrong to rely on laws that "apply to the Legislature except when the Legislature says they do not."
- ◆ the state budget provide tens of millions of dollars in new tax breaks for the rich and powerful while raising taxes on the working poor by scaling back the Earned Income Tax Credit.
- ◆ the Republicans make big cuts in health assistance for seniors and the poor and the disabled.



...and yet they have significantly improved the financial picture of the road building industry, the bankers, the big brewers, and the school privatization crowd.

Is this how you define democracy? Is this how you want Wisconsin to be viewed? Or are we witnessing government being purchased by the highest bidder or by the wealthy?

Who will stand up for democracy, the middle class worker or the general population?

**Can we count on you to OLLA?**

## Our Union, Your Union

Without a doubt, the world has changed for Unions. You already know that better than most. The challenges before us are varied and intense. The work of the Union is now different, and we are in the midst of a transition from the familiar to a brand new reality. We don't need to cite the reasons why this is happening but rather we need to acknowledge that the transition is well underway.

The real test of this Union will be in how we react to the changes and deal with the transition. Yes, change is good. But, it must be done carefully, with purpose, and grounded in the values of the members.

This is why the upcoming year will be so important. Discussions are already underway to consider the strategic plan of WEAC. Ann Hewitt, Northland Pines EA member and one of our WEAC Board reps, is on the committee. As a representative of NTU, she will be articulating the northern perspective of those aforementioned values. Consider contacting her to see what is happening on that committee and to offer your personal perspective of what you would like to see for the Union. Ann can be contacted at [acram1975@hotmail.com](mailto:acram1975@hotmail.com).

Spring is another opportunity to be a voice in the potential changes as a delegate to the WEAC RA. Participants to this meeting determine the budget and direction of the organization for the next year. The recommendations of the strategic planning committee will surely be considered at the RA. This upcoming RA has the makings of the biggest RA since the RA that restructured the organization and excluded Administrators from being members. Come be a part of history!

It is imperative Northern Tier UniServ members' voice be heard in this transition. Our issues are our reality and they deserve to be heard. Do not stand silently along the sidelines. Seek out ways to be heard this year!

## **NTU Union Advocate October Conference**

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!** Northern Tier is putting the final plans in place for another union advocate conference on October 28 (evening) and 29<sup>th</sup>!! The conference will offer breakouts on recertification and membership drives for locals with and without extensions. In addition, there will be larger sessions set up to begin coalition work on collective community action to support locals and groups that stand in support of their fellow workers.

This training will provide your team with information, data, documents, and coalition contacts/supporters to help you run successful organizing campaigns in your area. Also, John Nichols will be our guest speaker at lunch to talk about the need for similar work throughout the area/state. John is the associate editor of The Capital Times, author of seven books on politics and the media, writes about electoral politics and public policy for The Nation magazine, and is a contributing writer for The Progressive and In These Times.

If you make it to one labor organizing training event this year, this is the one you want to sign up for.

Please contact your local president and ask that your name be added to your local's team. Your president will RSVP the names of those attending the conference to NTU.

**Are you prepared to OLLA?**

**Watch the NTU website  
for upcoming dates  
and trainers for NBCT  
Candidates**